The Milking Hour.

You good old Boss, stand quietly now,
And don't be turning your head this way.
You're looking for Donald, it's plain to see,
But he won't be here to-day.
Nobody came with me, dear old Boss,
Not even to carry my pail; for, you see,
Donald's gone whistling down the lane,
And Donald is vexed with me.

And all because of a trifling thing:
He asked me a question, and I said "Nay."
I never dreamed that he would not guess
It was only a woman's way.
I wonder if Donald has ever learned
The motto of "Try and try again."
I think, if he had, it might have been
He had not learned in vain.

And there needn't have stretched between us two,
On this fair evening, the meadow wide,
And I needn't have milked alone to-night,
With nobody at my side.
What was it he said to me yester eve,
Something about—about my eyes?
It's strange how clever that Donald can be;
That is, whenever he tries.

Now, Bossy, old cow, you mustn't tell
That I've cried a little while milking you;
For, don't you see? it is nothing to me
What Donald may choose to do.
If he chose to go whistling down the lane,
I chose to sing gayly coming here.
But it's lonely without him, after all;
Now isn't it, Bossy dear?

I—hark! who's that? Oh, Donald, it's you!
Did you speak?—excuse me—what did you say?
"May you carry my pail?" Well, yes; at least,
I suppose, is you try, you may.
But, Donald, if I had answered No,
Do you think it would have occurred to you
Not to be vexed at a woman's way,
But to try what coaxing would do?

—*Harper's Weekly*.

A SOCIETY ITEM.

"*Did* ye see the *Thunderer*, Miss Abigail?" queried old Simon Sharpe, in quite a fever of excitement.

He was leaning over the little green-painted gate, coatless and blue-shirted. Just beyond Miss Abigail Byrnes paused in her task of tying up heavy-headed August roses—a tall, angular figure, clad in a brown-and-white striped print and big yellow sun bonnet. Very bony, scant of smiles, and hard of feature was Miss Abigail, but gentle and generous as a child's was the heart under the ugly calico gown.

"No," she replied, "I haven't seen it—what's the news?"

He responded with a counter question.

"You remember Roger Kearney?"

"To be sure. He went to the city to start a big store. What of him?"

"They be a-saying down at the Corner that just now when he had got his big store built, stocked and flourishin', he has gone and been burned clean out; every yard of silk stuff and ivory buttons."

He paused breathless.

Miss Abigail clasped her thin hands and elevated her pale brows in dismay—not at the peculiar English and curious rhetoric of her narrator, but at the startling information imparted.

"Land sakes!" she ejaculated. "You don t say so!"

Simon nodded vigorously.

"Yes," he affirmed, with apparent savage relish observable in even phlegmatic natures when the misfortune of another is the subject of discussion, "lost everything, they say! Hadn't no insurance neither. H'aint saved a spool o' thread. Not as much as a hook, eye, nor darnin' needle left!"

Miss Abigail promptly tied the strings of her sunbonnet afresh and let down her gown, which had been pinned carefully up. "I'll just run over to Mrs. Evans'," she declared, "and borrow the *Thunderer*. She takes it. News don't taste good at second hand, anyhow!"

And she went.

Leaning out of a picturesque, vine-wreathed window up at the rambling, white country house of which Miss Abigail was mistress looked pretty Dorothy Stratton.

"Where on earth is aunt going?" she asked herself bewilderedly as she caught sight of the tall, flying figure. "Leaving the roses only half tied up, too!" But just then a stray sunbeam lit the stone on Dorothy's finger to dazzling flame. She forgot all about Miss Abigail's hurried exit as she turned it now this way, now that, and ended by kissing it in a burst of rapture.

"You dear, dear little ring!" she

t was quite novel to her
ment and her ring.
ugust. In May she
the existence of
Carlisle.
Blue-Berry
successful
isolation,
very first
d have
dozen
soul she didn't believe there

Abigail went around
very stern counten-
eyes.

She was so lithe and graceful, with such round marvelous curves of throat and arms. And she held her small, sloe-black head with such charming dignity. And what could be more winsome than the face with its clear, colorless skin and liquid gray eyes, and curved black brows and grave, sweet, crimson mouth?

Just how June and July passed neither of these happy, foolish young people could have lucidly explained.

And the precise manner in which he had spoken at last, the shy confusion of her answer, the parting with regrets, hopes, love unutterable, was still a mere mystic, entrancing, delicious remembrance.

But there was the ring, a glittering, tangible reality. So what wonder Dorothy turned it up and down, and under and over, and kissed it in her sheer joy of heart?

Over at Mrs. Evans' Miss Abigail sat, her sunbonnet untied and pushed back on her head, her spectacles perched on her accommodating rigid nose, deep in the perusal of the *Thunderer*.

"Too bad, eh?" queried Mrs. Evans, briskly "topping" gooseberries.

"Yes," assented Miss Abigail, "after all his years of saving—eh! what's this?"

"What's what?" asked Mrs. Evans, startled at her guest's tone. She was staring straight at the sheet she held, her eyes very troubled and her mouth grimly set.

"Dear, dear, Miss Byrnes!" exclaimed Mrs. Evans, in feeble alarm "*do* tell!"

But her visitor made no reply, only roused herself with an effort, tied her sunbonnet strings with an energetic jerk, and marched straight out of the house, the *Thunderer* in her hand. Mrs. Evans stared after her a moment. Then she tapped her forehead significantly, muttered a single word, and went complacently on topping her gooseberries. Dorothy, still sitting dreamily by the vine-wreathed window, twisting the bright circlet round and round on her slim brown finger, started as Miss Abigail banged the garden-gate behind her and hurried up the path.

A heavy tread on the stairs, the door was flung wide, and she stalked into the dainty chamber, all pink silesia and snowy-dotted muslin, like a herald of war.

"Dorothy!" she said, in quite an awful voice.

"Aunt!" cried Dorothy, rising.

"Look there! Read!"

She held up the paper and waved her arm with a tragic gesture of command.

Dorothy glanced at the paragraph pointed out and read as bidden.

And this is what she read: "The social exodus has begun. Among the names of the pleasure-seekers leaving this evening on the steamship Asia to summer on the continent we notice those of Paul A. Carlisle and wife."

Dorothy looked at the paper blankly. Then she began and read it over again.

"Well?" questioned Miss Abigail sternly.

The girl stood up, white to the very lips and trembling a little.

"There's some—mistake!" she said.

Miss Abigail gave a distrustful snort.

"If there is," she asserted, "*we've* made it! He's a scamp, my dear!" And then, waxing emphatic, "A double-distilled scamp!"

"You mustn't speak so!" said Dorothy, striving to swallow the great choking lump in her throat. "It is—some other—Mr. Carlisle."

"Yes," mocked Miss Abigail scornfully, "*very* likely! Do you suppose there are two men with exactly the same name—*down* to the middle initial—whose departure would be considered worth chronicling in the *Thunderer*—do you?"

But Dorothy sprang to the door, and ran down the stairs, and out into the shadowy orchard like a thing pursued.

And there she flung herself down on the smooth, short grass dry-eyed, white-lipped, half-mad with searing, incredulous pain.

And up in the room she had just left hard-featured Miss Abigail sat down in Dorothy's own particular, beribboned rocker, and flinging her blue apron over her face cried like a baby for very sympathy. The day wore on, the gay, sweet, warm August day. And still Dorothy lay crushed, and faint, and heart-sick under the big tree.

The *Thunderer* was dated the 15th—this was the 17th. City papers were mellow when they reached the little village. He had been gone two days—but then he hadn't gone! There was some mistake, she kept telling herself over and over, though in her soul she didn't believe there

"I'll make some strawberry puff-balls for supper," she decided gravely. "She was always powerful fond of strawberry puff-balls, and maybe they'll comfort her some!" But then Miss Abigail had never been in love herself, and it takes more than strawberry puff-balls to cure some heartaches.

The soft purplish dusk lay over the farm when Dorothy felt a gentle touch on her shoulder.

"Come in to supper, child. You'll catch your death o' cold."

She rose up slowly.

"I am not going into the house," she said. "I should smother."

Miss Abigail held forth the tempting bait within, and shook her head in sorrowful foreboding as utterly disregardful, Dorothy walked away. Down at the gate she paused—the low, wide, green gate where she had so often stood to listen for the ringing footstep coming up the country road.

So often, but now—never again! Despite the pain of remembrance she found herself recalling every dear word, and look, and thought of the dead summer days. She had been something of a bookworm all her life, and now flashed to her brain and there burned the rebellious, passionate cry of Othello:

> My heart is turned to stone; I strike it
> And it hurts my hand!

Hark! a footstep! she must go in; how foolish she was growing to imagine it might be—*his*.

Nearer—nearer still! She could not move. She leaned heavily against the green post pillar. A voice! Whose voice? The gate was flung wide, close arms were round her——

Dark! Oh *how* dark it was growing——.

Five minutes later Miss Abigail looked up in swift amazement as a tall young figure strode into the little parlor bearing in his arms a slender, pink-clad burden.

"You!" she cried. "I thought you had gone to Europe with *your wife*. We read it in the *Thunderer*, and—

"And you believed it? Good heavens! Was that why Dolly fainted at sight of me? My father and mother sailed for the Continent. Our initials are the same. I told them all about Dorothy before they left, and if she will only consent to a hurried marriage we will join them in Paris in September. Oh, you're listening, you dear little sinner! What do you say—yes? That is right! And you doubted me! Dolly, Dolly! aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Yes," said Dolly, "I am!"

Effect of Lightning on Trees.

The Geneva correspondent of the London *Times* writes: The frequency of thunderstorms in Switzerland this summer (we have on an average two a week) has afforded Professor Colladon of Geneva,—a great authority on electricity and meteorology—ample opportunity of continuing his observations on the effect of lightning on trees and vegetation generally. He has ascertained that when lightning strikes a tree it leaves very few marks of its passage on the upper part and middle of the trunk, a peculiarity which he ascribes to the fact of those parts being more impregnated with sugar—a good conductor—than the lower part. As the electric fluid descends to the neighborhood of the heavier branches, where there is less saccharine matter, it tears open the bark and in many instances shivers the tree. It is no uncommon thing to find the lower part of a tree literally cut by the lightning, while the upper portion and the higher branches seemed to have suffered hardly at all. Oaks, however, would appear to present an exception to this rule, for they are often found with tops quite blasted, and the passage of the lightning lower down marked by a gouge-like furrow. These furrows sometimes go completely round the tree like a screw, the reason of which, says Professor Colladon, is that the lightning follows the cells of which the bark is composed lengthwise, and in certain sorts of wood these cells are disposed spirally. A curious effect of lightning on vines is that it invariably strikes a great many vine stocks at the same time over a space for the most part circular, from eight metres to twenty-five metres in diameter, and containing, therefore, several hundred vines. The plants most affected are those in the centre of the circle, and the number of burned and yellowed leaves diminish in proportion to their distance from that point. In July two vineyards in this canton were struck by lightning, and the first idea of their proprietors, on seeing their shriveled vines, was that a still more dreaded foe, phylloxera, had been at work; but when the professor was called in, he speedily enlightened them as to the true cause of the mischief, and, in proof of his diagnosis, pointed out that the ground in the centre of the circle was strewn with torn leaves and freshly-broken twigs.

Paying the Blind.

Every year, by act of the legislature of New York, a sum of twenty thousand dollars is distributed among the destitute blind of the city of New York, numbering about five hundred persons. Those who are able to walk are lead to the office of Mr. Blake, superintendent of the department of out-door poor, each bearing his doctor's certificate and his departmental ticket, proving his identity and his need. About four hundred of them gathered the other morning to receive their share, which amounted to thirty-eight dollars for each.

Among the unfortunate crowd there are cripples, deaf and dumb, aged people, children, Chinamen, negroes, Germans, Irish, and even a Turk with a red fez and a flowing white beard, all members of the sad brotherhood of the blind. The superintendent knows many of them by sight, and has a pleasant word for all. Many insist on shaking hands with him, and blessings in all languages fall upon his head. The New York *Herald* adds an amusing incident or two of a most touching scene.

An old man, with weather-beaten features, and the sign "I am blind" on his breast, waited with a smile on his face, while a pretty little girl with soft dark eyes, wiped his forehead with a handkerchief. A single Chinaman, John Anderson, received his ticket and informed the superintendent that he felt "vely well," but had to "hully up and gettee home to pay lent." Mrs. Shea, a handsome young woman, explained a bruised eye by saying she was trying to see whether her eye or the mantlepiece was the hardest.

It was surprising to see how quickly the blind men and women recognized each other in the crowd. Some had guides, while others trusted to their own acute sense to carry them through all right. In no case would the superintendent pay money to anyone but the person for whom it is intended, and where word was received that a blind person could not come to the hall the money was sent by a trusted messenger.

A few blind people who did not properly come within the class for whom the donation was intended noisily demanded why they did not receive postal cards. An outburst of anger was always avoided by the diplomatic official, who promised to consider the cases and send word of his decision. A stout able-bodied soldier made an earnest appeal for thirty-eight dollars, but Mr. Blake was very firm in his refusal.

"You get seventy-two dollars a month pension," he said, "and this money is for destitute people."

"But you are giving money to Mr. Nugent, who owns four lots of ground."

"I am, am I? Let me look at the book. Ah! No, sir, Nugent does not get a penny this year. I hope for the sake of your reputation that the blind people will always warn me of impostors, for there are many worthy people who are left out in the cold."

The Tiger's Apathetic Victims.

As a matter of fact, the tiger is not a specially ferocious animal. As the greatest authority on Indian natural history says, it is a harmless, timid animal. It feeds on animals that are prodigiously injurious to crops, and there are on record in India the complaints of villagers on the increase of deer and wild pigs in consequence of the destruction of tigers in their neighborhood. When it gets too feeble to catch wild animals it begins to eat tame ones, or, easier victims still, the men or women who are in charge of the cattle. It then becomes, as a "man-eater," a criminal against humanity, and death cannot overtake it too soon. But it is only those who know the Hindoo thoroughly who can credit the amazing apathy of these men, even when in imminent danger. So long as it's not actually visable they refuse to take precaution against peril, and I remember during the Afghan war assisting to thrash some lazy followers in order to arouse them to a proper sense of the necessity of saving their lives. They had squatted down to smoke by the roadside in the Khyber pass, though they knew the enemy was lurking in the rocks above them, and in the jungle behind them; though they had with their own eyes seen the corpses of camp followers lying where they had been murdered, when they sat down to smoke. In the very same way, the herdsman comes loafing along in the twilight, singing a song of the country as he goes (to let the tiger know that he is coming probably), and suddenly out of the sugar-canes flashes the tiger, and there is an end of that herdsman. But the next man will probably do the very same thing. He will take another road, or course, on his way home, but he will lag behind his cattle and sing to himself in the same ridiculous way, and out from underneath the tree springs the same old tiger. Indeed, it is one of the problems of Indian administration how to keep the natives from suicide. They prefer to have half the village down with the small pox, and then to carry a dead chicken round the stricken hamlet on the end of a pole, than to be vaccinated. They prefer to lose a prodigious number of their acquaintances by drowning than to protect their wells. They prefer to have tens of thousands of men and women bitten in the toes and thumbs; and die therefrom, than let enough light into a hut to see the difference between fire-wood and cobras.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

Distilled water in the daylight is of a blue color. By gaslight the color is green.

In the past forty years $40,000,000 has been spent in building and restoring churches in Wales.

According to Dr. H. Gradle, the progeny of one of the microscopic beings known as bacteria may, with plenty of food, amount to over 15,000,000 within twenty-four hours.

Experiments in determining the height and velocity of clouds by means of photography have been made at Kew, England, under the direction of Captain Abney.

M. Pasteur believes the cholera is produced by minute organisms of some kind, but the germs have not yet been discovered. He has recommended the French Government to send a special mission to Egypt to study the generation of this dread disease.

The doctors disagree. The now famous fossil footprints found last year at Carson, Nevada, and supposed to have been made by pre-historic human giants, are regarded by Professor O. C. Marsh as probable tracks of a large sloth. It is stated, however, that Dr. Harkness still insists that the impressions were left by a species of man, and that he finds his theory strengthened by fresh discoveries of tracks even more clearly defined than those first uncovered.

Sir Henry Thompson, the London surgeon, recognizes in fish a combination of all the elements of food that the human body requires in almost every phase of life, more especially by those who follow sedentary employment. To women he considers fish to be an invaluable article of diet, but he scouts as a complete fallacy the notion that fish-eating increases the brain power. "The only action fish had on the brain was to put a man's body into proper relations with the work he had to do.

Ants as Medicine.

A curious use is made of ants by the Indians in Brazil, who employ them to dress wounds, causing them to bite the edges together, and then cutting off the head; the jaws will not relax, but hold the wound together until healed. They were formerly used as a cruel instrument of torture by South African tribes, who tied their victim to a tree, smeared his body with grease, and placed an ants' nest at his feet. The Arabs placed an ant in the hand of a newly born babe, that the virtues of the insect may pass into the infant. Naturalists also sometimes make use of these industrious scavengers. When they require a perfect specimen of the smaller vertebrates, they place the body in a box, bore a few holes in it, and bury it near an ant's nest; in a few days a perfect and most deliciously whitened skeleton will be found in the box.

The Human Pulse.

The human pulse has rather a wide range, but the general average may be put about as follows: At birth, 140; at two years, 100; at from sixteen to nineteen years, 80; at manhood, 75; old age, 60. There are, however, great variations consistent with health. Napoleon's pulse is said to have been only 44 in the minute. A case is also related of a healthy man of 87 whose pulse was seldom over 30 during the last two years of his life and sometimes not more than 26. Another man of 87 enjoyed good health and spirits with a pulse of 29, and there is also on record the curious instance of a man whose pulse in health was never more than 45, and to be consistent in his inconsistency, when he had fever, his pulse fell to forty, instead of rising, as is usual.

An Egg Exchange.

One of the most important of the mercantile institutions of Berlin is an egg exchange. As the city consumes more than 12,000,000 dozens of eggs annually it is a business of great importance. On the forenoons of two days in the week the produce exchange is wholly given up to the egg dealers, both male and female. Uniform rates for eggs are thus established which are observed by all dealers.

THIS AND THAT.

New York in summer uses from 8,000 to 10,000 tons of ice a day.

Great attention has been bestowed in Germany within the last two years upon the cultivation of the common nettle. From it an immense number of articles are made, and there is scarcely a branch of textile industry in which it cannot be used. The growing of nettles has become part of the business of every small farmer. The crop never fails, no weather affects it, and as it requires planting only once in every ten or fifteen years, the labor of cultivation is small; and as it needs but three or four inches of earth, many a piece of unprofitable land, even old quarries and gravel-pits, are thus turned to account. A manufacturer in Dresden has succeeded in obtaining from it the finest thread known in the trade, so fine that 100,000 metres of it (or rather more than sixty miles of length) weigh only two and a half pounds.

A curious kind of weed which grows in the Arkansas valley has often proved misleading to sportsmen. It is shaped like a ball and varies in size from one foot or less in diameter to five or six feet, some specimens being as tall as a man. It grows upon a small stem, which is, however, stout enough to bear the mass till it has ripened and dried, when a puff of wind will blow it over and snap the slender support. Then it is that every gust of wind sends it rolling over the prairie, bounding over bushes and rocks with the greatest elasticity and lightness. When the wind is strong and high these tumbling weeds present a most peculiar appearance as they bound from rock to rock, and in more than one instance hunters have mistaken them for bisons and felt considerable irritation at the impossibility of bringing them within range of their guns.

Doctors are known to differ, and as a result it sometimes seems just as well for individuals to consult their own convenience instead of their physicians. For example, in the matter of sleeping, some doctors say lie with the head to the north, others hold a contrary opinion, and now that long journeys are made by rail it is amusing to find two eminent authorities differing as to the safest way to pass the night. A German doctor asserts that to lie with the feet to the engine draws the blood from the brain to the feet and produces cerebral anæmia, followed by sleep; whereas if the traveller lies with his head in that position, cerebral hyperaemia is the result and sleep is impossible. An American authority, on the other hand, holds a directly contrary opinion, and urges his patients to take their positions for the night with the head towards the locomotive and so slumber in peace. As sleeping in a railway car is difficult under any circumstances, one might as well try both methods.

For many years a club existed and flourished in a small English town in Lancashire, known as the Oyster and Parched Pea Club. Among the staff of officers was one known as Ostericus, whose duty it was to order and look after the oysters, which then came by fleet from London. The club rejoiced in a poet laureate or rhymesmith, and a Cellarius, who looked after the wine. Among the rules and articles of the club was one enjoining that "a barrel of oysters be provided every Monday night during the winter, at the equal expense of the members, to be opened exactly at 7.30 o'clock." Every member on having a son born was to pay a gallon, for a daughter half a gallon, of port to his brethren of the club within a month of the birth of such child, at any public house he should choose.

The value of trees in a city can scarcely be exaggerated. In Italy it is an offence against the law to cut them down, as it is found that an outbreak of fever usually follows any clearing away of the trees. And apart from this, how much they add to the beauty of any city. There seems to be an inseparable connection between the trees and drinking fountains in the municipal mind, a fact upon which the public are also to be congratulated. In Brooklyn, where very little is done for the city by the authorities, a private association exists for the improvement of the city, and great attention is paid by the members to the question of the planting of trees. It is little short of a crime to allow handsome trees to be mutilated and destroyed, and yet it is done every day. Quite recently a telegraph company, finding the trees in a certain portion of Brooklyn an obstacle to the stretching of their wire, had no compunction whatever in decapitating several of them, cutting their heads off in the most reckless manner. Instances of this kind are constantly occurring, and ought to be forbidden by law.